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INTERNATIONAL CONCILIATION
SPECIAL BULLETIN

GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY
A STUDY IN NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS



BY
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INTRODUCTORY

In response to many requests, the Association for International Conciliation takes pleasure in printing for circulation in the United States a limited edition of the important address, "Great Britain and Germany; A Study in National Characteristics," delivered by Viscount Haldane at the University of Oxford, on August 3, 1911. This address was made at a time when public opinion, both in Great Britain and in Germany, was in an excited state. Revealing as it did that an influential member of the British Cabinet had a keen and sympathetic insight into the life and spirit of the German people, it seemed to the Association for International Conciliation that the address should be brought promptly to the attention of the German reading public. Through the coöperation and under the supervision of Mr. Alfred H. Fried, of Vienna, the address was translated into German and a very large edition of it was distributed throughout Germany. There is every reason to believe that the effect of this action was helpful to the cause of peace and international good will.

NICHOLAS MURRAY BUTLER

March 1, 1912.

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GREAT BRITAIN AND GERMANY

It was not without hesitation that I accepted the invitation to speak to you on this occasion. It is never easy to make a satisfactory appreciation of a country to which one stands in the relation of a foreigner. Those who try are sure to misjudge much and to miss more. Germany, moreover, is for us Britons, owing to reasons which I shall try to explain, a specially difficult country to understand. Its people possess traits so like those of our own that we are apt to overlook those other traits in which they are profoundly unlike. Hence arise misinterpretations and disappointments on both sides of the German Ocean.

Nevertheless, a period in history has arrived when it becomes the duty of public men in each country to endeavor to follow and fathom the currents of public life and opinion in the other. To this end the study of national spirit is essential. How often have I seen in the newspapers of both Germany and England articles which missed the point and attributed unreal motives, simply because the writers were wanting in knowledge! And what is true of journalists may be true even of statesmen.

In Oxford people sometimes dare to use language which they would not venture on in Parliament. Moreover, some of you who are listening are Germans and professors besides. I will, therefore, take my life in my hand, and suggest to you a racial difference in habit of mind, to be stated thus: The Englishman acts *der Vorstellung nach*. The German *dem Begriffe nach*. The Englishman has, less often than the German, formed in his mind an abstract principle or plan before he moves. This is so partly by habit and partly by choice. It is the outcome of his characteristic individualism, and experience has taught him that it often proves a source of strength. But it not infrequently proves a source of weakness. He constantly finds the path he has entered on

blocked by obstacles which he might have foreseen. "*Erst wägen dann wagen*" is a maxim too valuable in practice to be safely neglected. It may sometimes paralyze action in this world of the contingent and unforeseen. But those who practice it know where they stand, if they do not always know where to move.

Of course people who by habit of mind act in these different fashions are sure to misunderstand each other. The effort that is requisite, even when they most wish to put themselves at the other point of view, is for the great majority too severe to be long sustained.

The divergence in mental temperament is embarrassing in itself. And it is made yet more embarrassing by another fact. We in this country, and I am not sure that the same is not true of our German cousins, are a little unimaginative about our neighbors. Our "*paedagogischer Zug*" is sometimes provoking. The lesson which Matthew Arnold sought to teach his fellow citizens here when he published "*Friendship's Garland*" forty years ago has not yet been widely learned. We used to have friction on this account with the French, and, but for circumstances, we might have it still. We do sometimes have it with the Germans because the circumstances happen to be not quite so favorable. It is, therefore, all the more desirable that we should take pains to get insight into the habits of thought of a great and practical nation with which we are being brought into an ever increasing contact, and in what I have to say to you to-night I will try to contribute something, however small, to the too contracted fund of the necessary knowledge. I propose to devote the bulk of this paper to an attempt to trace the growth and meaning of what seems to me to be the German habit of mind, and to a description of the reasons why the outlook of Germany is what it is to-day. The narrative is not only a deeply interesting one, but a record which confers a title to high distinction in the world's history, even for a nation so great in other respects. It

is, moreover, a narrative not the less striking because the changes it records all took place within a comparatively short period.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF GERMAN PRACTICAL LIFE

The practical life of the Germany of to-day rests, far more than does that of Great Britain, on abstract and theoretical foundations. To understand it we must examine its intellectual development, and for the history of the intellectual development of German life the Reformation is a cardinal fact. Luther led the uprising of the spirit of liberty of conscience against the then abstract and hardly human domination of the Church. He accomplished for a large part of what is to-day Germany the triumph of the individual over an organization which had for the time being outgrown its mission and deteriorated into what was mechanical. But the price of Luther's victory had to be paid. You cannot set thought free for certain purposes only. The light of inquiry presently began to be turned in upon the foundations of Luther's own faith. That faith rested on grounds of a subjective character, and its authority was based on feeling. Now the history of the intellectual development of the world shows that it has never been safe to endeavor to divorce feeling from knowledge. The effort is constantly being renewed, and to-day even M. Bergson, the latest and most brilliant exponent of the attempt to assign a secondary place to knowledge and to bring back the real to the felt, seems to me to invite the inquirer to travel along a dubious path. To try to accomplish, what he, by the way, is careful not to attempt, the discovery of a safe and permanent foundation for faith in what is wholly divorced from reason, is from a scientific point of view to court speedy failure. This opinion has always been strongly held in Germany, and it was slowly but surely brought to bear on the Protestantism of Luther. That Protestantism gradually ac-

quired, in the minds of educated men, a negative character. It was recognized as a legitimate and necessary protest against the doctrine of the absolute authority of a Church. But it was also pronounced to be the beginning only and not the end of wisdom. The history of Protestantism, and of the sects into which it has broken itself up, show that it is not enough to reject the doctrine of external authority, but that the authority of a general system based on knowledge, however difficult it may be to find such a system, has to be sought for. When the Elector managed in 1529 to bring together in the conference at Marburg Luther and Zwingli, believing that the German and Swiss parties in the Reformation movement would unite their forces, he proved to be wrong. They got very near each other in the course of the conference, so far as good feeling went, and sufficiently near in words. But there was no real common basis. The historian tells us how, at the end, Luther drew back, and refused to shake hands with the Swiss leader—"Ye are," he said, "of a different spirit from us."

It was therefore natural that with a reflective people like the Germans a definite movement should follow that of the Reformation, a movement directed to the discovery of a stable basis on which religion might rest, a basis which should afford room for science and religion alike. The sense of this necessity became, on its subjective side, apparent in such writings as that of Lessing's "Nathan the Wise." On the side of abstract knowledge we see it begin in the metaphysics of the pre-Kantian period, of the period of such writers as Wolf, and in the theological Rationalism, which was its counterpart, of such books as the Wolfenbüttel Fragments. But the mere reaction from the subjective, on which alone Luther had endeavored to base the claim to authority of the Bible, went too far to be enduring. The eighteenth century was a dry period for Germany until a second great movement arose.

HEINE ON LUTHER

One of the acutest of modern critics, a critic whose capricious humor obscured his serious side, has traced the relation of the Reformation to this movement. Heine, who knew more about great things than people give him credit for, sums up the progress in this period. Of Luther he tells us that through him Germany gained freedom of thought. But he adds that Luther gave Germany not only freedom of thought but also the means of movement. To the spirit he gave a body, to the thought he gave words; he created the German language by his translation of the Bible. And even more remarkable, he says, were Luther's songs. Sometimes they resemble a flower that grows on a rocky crag, or again a ray of moonlight trembling over a restless sea. And sometimes he sings to stimulate the courage of his followers and inflame himself to the fierce rage of battle. He refers, no doubt, to the well known "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott," when he says that a true battle song was the martial strain with which Luther and his followers marched into Worms. The old Cathedral trembled at those unwonted tones, and the ravens, in their dark nests in the steeple, started with affright. That song, the Marseillaise of the Reformation, preserves to this day its inspiring power. But, as Heine tells us, the spirit that Luther enchained, could not have limits set to its power. Reason is now man's sole lamp, and conscience his only staff in the dark mazes of life. Man now stands alone, face to face with his Creator, and chants his songs to Him. Hence this literary epoch opens with hymns. And even later, when it becomes secular, the most intimate self consciousness, the feeling of personality, rules throughout. Poetry is no longer objective, epic and naïve, but subjective, lyric, and reflective. At this stage Heine brings a new figure on to the scene. Since Luther, he thinks, Germany has produced no greater and better man than

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. "These two are our pride and our joy. In the troubles of the present we look back at their consoling figures, and they answer with a look full of bright promise. The third man will come also, will perfect what Luther began and what Lessing carried on—the third Liberator." Like Luther, Lessing's achievements consisted not only in effecting something definite, but in agitating the German people to its depths, and in awakening through his criticism and polemics a wholesome intellectual activity. He was the vivifying critic of his time, and his whole life was a polemic. His insight made itself felt throughout the widest range of thought and feeling—in religion, in science, and in art. Lessing, declares Heine, continued the work of Luther. After Luther had freed Germany from the yoke of tradition and had exalted the Bible as the only wellspring of Christianity, there ensued a rigid word service, and the letter of the Bible ruled just as tyrannically as once did tradition. Lessing contributed the most to the emancipation from the tyranny of the letter. His tribune was art, for when he was excluded from the pulpit or the chair he sprang on to the stage, speaking out more boldly, and gaining a more numerous audience.

HEINE ON KANT

In the year of his death, 1781, there appeared a book from the pen of a still more profound revolutionary. In that year Kant published at Königsberg the "Critique of Pure Reason." Heine likens the intellectual revolution which this book produced to the material revolution in France, and he compares, in his own fashion, Kant to Robespierre. "On both sides of the Rhine we behold the same rupture with the past; it is loudly proclaimed that all reverence for tradition is at an end. As in France no privilege, so in Germany no thought is tolerated without proving its right to exist; nothing is taken for granted. And as in France fell the Monarchy, the keystone of the

old social system, so in Germany fell theism, the keystone of the intellectual *ancien régime*. It is said that the spirits of darkness tremble with affright when they behold the sword of an executioner. How, then, must they stand aghast when confronted with Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'! The book is the sword with which in Germany theism was decapitated. To be candid, you French are tame and moderate compared with us Germans. At most you have slain a King, and he had already lost his head before he was beheaded." Then Heine draws a picture of Kant, with his bourgeois and methodical habits, and speaks of the strange contrast between the outer life of the man and his destructive, world-convulsing thoughts. Had the citizens of Königsberg surmised the whole significance of these thoughts they would have felt a more profound awe in the presence of this man than in that of an executioner. But the good people saw in him nothing but a professor of philosophy." "Nature," concludes Heine, "had intended both Robespierre and Kant to weigh out sugar and coffee, but fate willed it otherwise, and into the scales of one it laid a King, into those of the other a God. And they both weighed correctly."

The view of Kant's teaching which Heine suggests is of course deficient. Kant was constructive as well as critical, and he laid the foundations of a far greater conception of God than any that he destroyed. The figure of Immanuel Kant indeed is one of the noblest in the history of spiritual life on its moral as well as on its intellectual side. His philosophy was far-reaching, alike in practice and in theory. For he completely divided the universe into two aspects, that of the world of actual experience, where necessity reigned and science held its sway, and the other aspect of the moral world, where the cardinal principle was that of complete freedom and complete responsibility—"Thou canst because thou oughtst." Between science and religion there could be no conflict, for

each had its own sphere, and the two spheres were absolutely and scientifically marked off by a boundary line which could not really be crossed. But in the hands of Kant this distinction was to break down, and in the third of his Critiques—that of Judgment—he was driven to admit that, confronted by even that aspect of things with which experience through the senses furnishes us, we find ourselves driven beyond the categories of mechanism to the qualification of causes by ends, and perhaps even by the supreme and ultimate fact of self-consciousness. Yet although this somewhat grudging admission was to be seized on by his successors, the value of his achievement in the Critical Philosophy was not thereby diminished. He had succeeded in raising the entire level—in bringing life into what had been a collection of dry bones. He had restored the worlds of moral obligation and of beauty to their positions as real, though real in a different way from the world of mechanism. He had made for religion a place—within somewhat narrow limits of pure reason it is true—but still a place where it could find a firm foundation and base a claim to authority which science could not shake. And by doing all this he had made possible a further great work, that of the poets and the idealists who were to dominate German thought for the first half of the nineteenth century, and to exercise a profound influence beyond the confines of Germany.

THE SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT OF GERMAN PHILOSOPHY

In the hands of Fichte, Schelling, and finally of Hegel, the Kantian philosophy was profoundly transformed. A more widely embracing meaning was given to self-consciousness. Within its closed circle the entire universe was brought as under a supreme and final conception, and brought as a connected whole. Thought and feeling were no longer separated as though independent existences, but were dis-

played as partial aspects of a single movement of mind. The categories of intelligence were extended in their scope and given an organic relation, co-extensive with the entire content of self-consciousness, in which they found their meaning and completion. The object world was looked on as real in the same sense as the subject world, and both as arising by distinction within self-consciousness itself. God was regarded as imminent, as a spirit to be worshiped in spirit and in truth, and not as an unknowable First Cause. Science, morality, art, religion, were all assigned to their parts in the movement of divine and infinite self-consciousness which was ever realizing itself in finite forms such as that of the individual man. Yet that divine and infinite self-consciousness was shown to imply for its realization the form of the finite, just as, on its part, the finite had its foundation and reality in God and God alone. Because the higher categories of self-consciousness, outside of which there was no meaning, even for God himself, were above those of the mechanism of which they were at once the completion as well as the presupposition, no question of freedom arose. For the ultimate reality was spiritual, and it is of the essence of spirit to be free.

Such was the movement of the early part of the nineteenth century on its philosophical side. It was carried no doubt to great lengths and excesses. But it was destined to influence history profoundly, and, as a first step, a great practical proof of the reality of its foundations appeared almost at once in the world of art. The spirit of idealism was presently found to be one which had extended beyond the philosophers. Goethe and Schiller practiced and taught in another shape the same great principles. They too passed beyond Kant, and passed in the same direction as his successors in the schools of philosophy. Now that direction was not, as is often erroneously said, from the living and concrete to the abstract and lifeless. It has frequently been made a reproach, not

only against German philosophy, but against Goethe himself, that the highest and most abiding element in human activity, the spiritual and living, was ignored in the teaching of this time. To-day the reproach has been brought forward, as regards German idealism generally, in a definite form, and before an audience such as this the reproach ought not to be passed by in silence. The late Professor James of Harvard and M. Bergson, already referred to, and one of the most distinguished of living philosophers, have elaborated it. In two of his books, "Les données immédiates de la Conscience" and "L'Évolution Créatrice," M. Bergson has drawn a sharp distinction between knowledge, which he declares to be always abstract and confined to representation of what are really spatial relations, and the direct consciousness of creative evolution in a real time. To the latter he refers us for the "elan" which is the true explanation of the development both of the living world and of conscious mind itself. Bergson's doctrine has been laid hold of as something wholly new, and as putting investigation on a quite fresh track. And his doctrine is stated not only in a new form, but with a wealth of scientific knowledge and a lucidity of expression which justify for it a claim to genuine originality. Yet the doctrine of an inherent impulse, such as this great French thinker seeks to establish, is in itself no new one. German idealism itself at one time laid great emphasis on it. Schopenhauer has left no school to carry on his teaching and his books are to-day much less in evidence than they once were. But he, too, found in knowledge but a derivative phenomenon of a deeper lying *nisus*, which underlay the nature of things and constituted their ultimate reality. Unlike Bergson he considered Time to be merely a subjective form. In agreement with Bergson, he regarded abstract Space as being little more. But for him, also, the ultimately real, that into which all else can be resolved, while it is itself incapable of being resolved at all, was not knowledge. Like Kant, whose true

successor he claimed to be, he declined to recognize the domain of knowledge as absolute, but he went further and resolved it into something deeper than itself. This he called "WILL," and yet in the end he was able to tell us of its nature, of the *nisus* or striving of Will, no more than Bergson has been able to tell us of his "creative impulse." It is the less curious that German idealism should have assigned, in the minds of certain of its disciples, a subordinate reality to knowledge, when we reflect that not only had Kant suggested an awareness of a raw material of sensation as an irreducible element in cognition, but that Schelling and his school had, later on, found the key to the discovery of the nature of ultimate reality, not in knowledge, but in what Schelling called "Intellectual Intuition," and in the somewhat obscure notion of an Absolute which Hegel was presently to deride as "the night in which all cows look black."

THE REAL CHARACTER OF GERMAN INTELLECTUALISM

It has been said with truth that wherever there arises a great movement such as that of German idealism, it is in danger, if its preachers do not watch closely, of degenerating into an abstract intellectualism, a tendency to reduce the being of the universe to what has been called "a ballet of bloodless categories." The strength of such intellectualism is that it insists resolutely, as against such critics as Schelling and Schopenhauer and M. Bergson alike, that words are useless unless an exact meaning can be attached to them, and that such a meaning can be assigned only in terms of knowledge. *Esse* becomes in the end co-extensive with *intelligi*. But, on the other hand, the weakness of such idealism is that in the treatment of it by any but the greatest writers it tends to get out of hand. Apparently it need not do so. In its highest forms German idealism did not separate thought from feeling as if they were separate existences. On the contrary they were for it

only correlative aspects of one single reality, the actual and living content of self-consciousness. In no form of self-conscious activity was identity to be found except in and through difference. Thought is no mere faculty of abstract identification. Hegel himself adopted the supposed Aristotelian maxim "Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu." "The contents of our consciousness," he says, "remain one and the same, whether they are felt, seen, represented, or willed, and whether they are merely felt or felt with an admixture of thoughts, or merely and simply thought." We thus reach a conclusion which will prove to be of importance for the general purpose of this address. The true tendency of the idealism of Germany in the early part of the nineteenth century was in the direction of regarding the real as concrete and living, and as immediate for consciousness just as much as mediated in reflection. It is, therefore, not surprising that, to begin with, in the great poets of the period we find this characteristic markedly prominent. Schopenhauer, over whom Goethe had exercised much influence, recognized it. Both he and Hegel agreed with Goethe's great doctrine:

"Natur hat weder Kern noch Schale,
Alles ist sie mit einem Male."

GOETHE

With Goethe this was no empty saying. In his scientific work and his poetry alike he never failed to insist on it. Nature was for him something living, and reality was this living process. The notion of creative evolution, to use M. Bergson's phrase, was the key to his researches into the metamorphoses of plants and to his general ideas of morphology. The conception of a rigid mechanical universe was abhorrent to him. When he wishes Mephistopheles to mock at the student, he makes him say:

"Wer will was Lebendig's erkennen und be-
 schreiben,
 Sucht erst den Geist heraus zu treiben,
 Dann hat er die Teile in seiner Hand,
 Fehlt leider nur das geistige Band;
 Encheiresin naturæ nennt's die Chemie,
 Spottet ihrer selbst und weiss nicht wie."

It is the same throughout. Life was for Goethe the grand feature of the objective universe, and observation and not abstract scientific classification was the way to come at it. That is one reason why he excelled in lyric verse. In his lyrics he hardly ever writes a line that does not embody the sense of life. His maxim for mankind he puts in his "Faust" into the lips of the Deity when he makes him, in the prologue, apostrophize men thus:

"Doch ihr, die echten Göttersöhne,
 Erfreut euch der lebendig reichen Schöne.
 Das Werdende, das ewig wirkt und lebt,
 Umfass euch mit der Liebe holden Schranken,
 Und was in schwankender Erscheinung schwebt,
 Befestiget mit dauernden Gedanken."

To me these words seem to be not only profoundly characteristic of the idealistic thought of Germany at the highest point it touched. We shall see presently how the principle was to be applied in the practical life of the State.

I am aware that as regards the philosophical development what I have expressed is not the common opinion. But reflection on what the great German idealists wrote has made me think that this is the true view, and I refer to it here because it bears on what comes after. There is no incompatibility between the passion for concrete and living reality, and the passion for exhibiting it in a system. Goethe himself had a thoroughly systematic mind, and, as some of you at Oxford have pointed out, Hegel was behind no philosopher, ancient or modern, in his resolute refusal to separate thought from things, the abstract from the

concrete, the continuous from the discrete, and Being from Becoming.

SYSTEM IN GERMAN NATIONAL LIFE

System then, system necessarily in its first aspect abstract, but system that has its beginning and end in concrete life, this was the intellectual inheritance of the German nation from the philosophers and poets of the early nineteenth century. Some one once said "Without Goethe, no Bismarck." It seems to me that this saying is true. But its author might have added that without the great German thinkers there would also have been no Scharnhorst, no Clausewitz, no Roon and no Moltke. There is hardly anything in the history of modern Germany that illustrates more thoroughly what has been called "the wonderful might of thought" than the capacity it has developed for organization. An especially fine illustration is the organization of the German military system. It began after the battle of Jena. Prior to that catastrophe German generals had ceased to think. They had been content to adhere blindly to the traditions they had inherited from Frederick the Great. But these traditions belonged to a system which was of the past, and was bound up with the personality of an almost unique leader—one who could do almost what he liked with his army, and who had fashioned his strategy and his tactics and his Staff, not for all time, but to deal with the special problem of his period, the problem which he had in his day to solve.

In the pages of Von Treitschke's "Bilder," and especially in the chapter called "Der Anfang des Befreiungskrieges" the story is told of how the change came about. Von Treitschke was a great writer of history. He describes with a vividness which recalls Macaulay to the English student. He is never more in his element than when he is depicting the uprising against Napoleon in 1813. He tells us first of all of the inspiration of Prussia by her statesmen, her soldiers, her thinkers, and her poets. He draws the

picture of a nation penetrated by enthusiasm and determination in every rank and every phase of life. He describes how the national energy was directed and organized by great military leaders like Scharnhorst and Blücher. And then he tells how a great army was rapidly created, apparently by the people themselves, with a single purpose, that of delivering Prussia from the yoke of the oppressor. The narrative never flags, the historian remains at his high level throughout. Napoleon is in the end driven out of Germany; then peace follows. For the rest we do not need to turn to the pages of any particular author. The inspiration of the spirit of victory passed into a series of diverse writers. Clausewitz shows us to what a high point of literary as well as scientific excellence a great military critic can attain. The idealist commentators on the history of the State show the profound effect which a successful effort at self-deliverance can exercise over even the most abstract of philosophers. Everywhere German thought at this period discloses the surroundings of the thinkers, and the reality of the conception of the State which was prevalent. The individual finds his best and highest life as a citizen in the nation to which he belongs. We have traveled far from the comparatively recent teaching of Kant. The general will has become much more prominent than the individual will, and Government has revealed itself as the dominant fact.

THE TRANSITION PERIOD

This state of mind could not last, but it is a tribute to German tenacity in holding to conceptions that it was to change as little as it did. There came next a period in which the abstract views of the school of the Left prevailed over the school of the Right wing. It is not easy to realize that in founding a revolutionary movement Marx and Lasalle believed themselves to be carrying the torch which Hegel had kindled. But they did believe it. The new Aufklärung held the

field for a considerable time. Germany gradually turned from idealism to science, and in a less but still marked degree to Socialism. Her literature became insignificant and her philosophy lost its hold. But in science she became stronger than ever, and in the faculty of business organization strongest of all. This was natural. Nothing so recalls a people to serious practical purposes as war does, with the havoc which it plays with individual life, and Prussia had a succession of wars. They culminated in 1870, and Bismarck then was free to turn his attention to industrial and social organization. Whatever criticism may be passed on the policy Germany thought out and adopted, at least it was a policy which had been carefully considered. Since the days of Friedrich List the avowed purpose of the prevailing school of economists in Germany had been to subordinate economic to national considerations, and above all to the end of German unification. This was the line which Bismarck in the main consistently pursued. For this purpose he introduced into the life of the people organization wherever he could. In education, in military training, in her poor law, Germany began to stand out more and more among the nations. Naturally a process so far-reaching as that which Bismarck developed was sure to be attended by its nemesis in the shape of reaction. And reaction came. The social democrats on the one hand, writers like Nietzsche on the other, and the modern spirit, in the shape of a freely expressed criticism of the German school system for the narrowness of the type it produced, were inevitable. To glance in passing at the illustration which German education affords, it is odd to reflect that Eton and Harrow, institutions which many people here do not regard as free from grave defects, have become much thought of in educational circles in Germany. And why? Not for the learning they impart, but because in these and other great public schools in England the real rulers are seen to be the boys themselves, and the tendency is to produce indi-

viduality and the qualities which go to the making of leaders of men.

THE INFLUENCE OF GERMAN EXAMPLES

In these as in other matters it is only by estimating things on balance that reliable conclusions can be reached. The German system of education has many advantages and certain disadvantages. These last can be mitigated if something of the English Public School spirit can be introduced into Germany without sacrificing the enormous advantage she has over us in the organization in other respects of her secondary schools. It is the same with many other institutions. It is not an unmixed good to a country to be overgoverned, and Germany is still probably too much governed for that free development of individuality which is characteristic of life here and in the United States. But this must not be taken to mean that the order which prevails in so many departments of German social life is not a great advantage to her, and one which ought, as far as possible, to be preserved if she ever, in her constitutional development, approximates more nearly to our models. In many ways we ourselves are rapidly adopting, with the modifications that the national habit of mind makes inevitable, German examples. I do not mean only in such fields as that of National Insurance, although that is not a bad illustration, but in other directions. I am at present much occupied as Chairman of a Royal Commission that is sitting on University Education in London, and I am much struck by the growing influence of German University methods that is apparent in the evidence of the numerous expert witnesses we have examined. In this direction and in technical education the Teutonic spirit is moving among us, but moving in a fashion that is on the whole our own. And, on the other hand, Germany herself is learning something from us. She is studying our methods of colonial development and applying them. And she is watching what is a char-

acteristic feature of our national life, our vigorous local government. Moreover, she is herself altering in her habits of thought and feeling. The period of materialism and of reaction from idealism seems to be passing. The negative influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche seems to be spending itself. Nothing very definite has yet emerged in the form of a prevailing characteristic. But it is well to note that there are indications in many directions of a revival of the influence of the outlook on life of Goethe and the great idealists.

WINDELBAND ON MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENT

Two years ago a book appeared in Germany which contained several things which impressed me a good deal. It was a reprint of five addresses delivered by one of the best-known of modern historians of philosophy and literature—Professor Windelband, of Heidelberg. In this work, which he published under the title of "Die Philosophie im Deutschen Geistesleben des 19. Jahrhunderts," Professor Windelband traces the course of German thought, in the poets as well as the metaphysicians and moralists, through the century that is just over. He shows how the creed of Romanticism had its form profoundly modified by the growth of a demand for a practical application to life. "Die Forderung der Tat," he says, became, "wirklich der Weisheit letzter Schluss zu dem sich die Philosophie wie die Dichtung bekannte." He points out that, just as Schleiermacher tried to give religion a practical significance for the lives and deeds of educated people, so Hegel summoned them from their dreams to realize themselves in the performance of their duties to the State. This fruitful period was succeeded by one of materialism and pessimism, which again, under Positivist habits of mind, gave way to the standpoint of science, and especially of psychology. The larger significance of the historical method was forgotten. "Just at the moment," says

the professor, "when we Germans had begun to make history, we ceased to wish to know anything of history." The powerful personality of a man of genius, Bismarck, had created the German Empire; his call for the exercise of a national will found a response in all directions, and the impulse to volition rather than speculation, to action and creation, became dominant. "Wir wissen zu viel, wir wollen zu wenig. Aus dem Lernvolk soll ein Tatvolk werden"; so people began to declare all round.

But at this stage Windelband points out that a new tendency made itself felt. Democracy seemed to begin to move with giant strides. The masses realized that for the attainment of practical results knowledge was power, and the schoolmaster a veritable leveler up. The workmen demanded participation in what had been the privilege of leadership of the classes. Social problems became increasingly attractive, and there was apparent a tendency to regard it as possible to look on all men as alike who had attained to a certain standard of learning.

This tendency, he says, produced an almost immediate reaction. The fear arose that the unique value and quality of personality might be overlooked, and even lost to the nation. Personality in thought, in art, in action, had been the main source of the strength of the German nation, and now it seemed that a movement was on foot to reduce individuality to a dead level on the demand of the masses. He tells us how the protest against this demand assumed its first form in art, and how the strongest expression of the struggle of individuality to free itself from the crushing and leveling power of the masses came from Nietzsche. This, he says, was the secret of the hold which Nietzsche got over great numbers of his countrymen. But Nietzsche's was a too brutal insistence on the right of the "overman" to dominate. It was an "Umwertung aller Werte." It confused the national ideas of value and moral worth, and it could not last. A yet more modern tendency has, de-

clares the professor, set in in Germany. The demand has been made that philosophy shall show the way to a better and more real appreciation of moral values of a permanent kind, the kind that has, amid the changing interests of the period, an abiding foundation in a higher spiritual reality. The rule of the masses has increased and is increasing so far as the things of outward life are concerned. What is needed is a strong and heightened personal life that can win back and preserve its own spiritual inwardness. Thus there is apparent in Germany a new tendency to return to the great systems of idealism which have proclaimed the spiritual foundation of all reality. It is not with the transitory forms of the old effort at logical construction that educated opinion is concerning itself. The abstract formulas of the old metaphysic no longer interest the general student. But he has begun to realize once more the splendid and convincing power with which the great German thinkers disentangled from a mass of historical material the permanent basis of moral and intellectual values, and brought to the general consciousness a significance in these values that was beyond the level of what is transitory or merely utilitarian. The relation of the self-conscious and self-developing individual to the community is the new problem, and the great question is how the infinite value of the individual inner life, and the claims of the society of which the individual is a member and on which he is dependent are to be reconciled. This is the task which modern Germany has set to philosophy and art, and on the solution they offer will depend the question whether they are considered worthy of their mission.

DEMOCRACY IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND

Such is the view of modern Germany set before us by Professor Windelband as lately as two years ago. With us in Great Britain the state of things is not quite the same. Democracy is no doubt ad-

vancing, and with even greater strides than across the German ocean. But although there is a growing demand for education there is, I think, a greater disposition here among the masses to regard the man who already possesses it as in a class apart. It is a possession less familiar to our people. They have never been led by fighting philosophers such as were Marx and Lasalle. The professors of political economy do not come on the side of the movement towards Socialism as freely as is the case in Germany. Nor, on the other hand, is the cry against socialistic legislation a battle cry of our political strife to anything like the same extent. And yet the two democracies have, in vital points, such as the desire that the State should insist on better conditions of life for those who work with their hands, much in common. It is one of the most reliable foundations for the hope of better and more intimate relations between the two countries in the days to come that this should be so. The German democracy would doubtless follow its rulers to war, as would in all probability the democracy here. But both democracies are more and more influencing the policy of these rulers, as the German Chancellor pointed out in a speech made not long ago, and neither democracy regards war in any other light than that of a calamity. A marked and growing interest in pressing forward the demand for the solution of social problems is a guarantee of peace. The more intimate the knowledge of each other's affairs becomes in the case of the two nations, the better for everybody. But the process cannot be a very rapid one. The difference of temperament is partly racial and partly due to other reasons.

MUTUAL FORBEARANCE

I have tried to disentangle the genesis and growth of some differences of mental habit and tradition which make it difficult for Englishmen and Germans fully to understand each other. If my analysis is

even approximately right, there is room for the citizens of both countries to become less keenly conscious than at present of each other's infirmities. In the great mission of civilizing the world, in its commercial and industrial development, in the production and exchange of goods, in science, in literature, in art, the two nations have many opportunities and aptitudes in common. Theirs is a mission and a duty in the discharge of which rivalry might well be stingless. It were a thousand pities if peaceful coöperation in work so manifold and so great, and so much in the interest of the world as a whole, were marred or even impeded by unnecessary suspicions. And yet the marring and the hindering are often to be witnessed. They arise mainly from what is the source of most of the evils of life—ignorance and want of forbearance. Given fuller knowledge, and that capacity for self-restraint should quickly and surely operate which among educated races generally checks the tendencies to diverge coming from difference of temperament. Still even this capacity cannot always be reckoned on. There are many Englishmen and Germans who have knowledge, and who practice this self-restraint. But there are still more, even among the highly educated classes, who in varying degrees fail to do so. I have seen a good many illustrations of mischief arising from the want of the practice. Some of those that were least important in themselves have left with me the most vivid impressions. I have witnessed in business relations the shortcoming in this respect of able men of both countries. I used to see it in the days when I was at the bar, and I now sometimes see the same shortcoming illustrated in public affairs. I have noticed cases in which Germans have misjudged the meaning of British policy. And I have observed English politicians at times apt either unduly to suspect the supposed particular intentions of German statesmen, or alternatively to think that good may be done by indulging in vague and sentimental appeals to them. Now German policy is largely influenced

by Prussia. It is the habit of mind of Prussians to begin by defining a principle and then to test everything by it. They are not fond of gush, and are surprised if anyone doubts that the natural point of departure should naturally be to lay down clearly as a preliminary to discussion what they hold to be the interest of Germany. It is well to realize this habit of thought, and to take account of it. To ignore it is only to get ourselves misunderstood and probably supposed to be concealing some hidden counter policy. German habits of thinking in abstract terms, even when dealing with the most immediate and practical affairs, and of looking for principles everywhere, make things at times trying for those who have not this useful if difficult habit of mind in the same degree.

DIFFICULTIES IN MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Then the German language is another cause of hindrance to Englishmen. It is in a high measure precise, but it does not lend itself like French, or even like English, to the expression of *nuances*. And when it appears in a translation, the *nuances* are generally not there at all, and the meaning is apt to seem harsh. I wish all our politicians who concern themselves with Anglo-German relations, those who are pro-German as well as those who are not, could go to Berlin and learn something, not only of the language and intellectual history of Prussia, but of the standpoint of her people, and of the disadvantages as well as the advantages of an excessive lucidity of conception. Nowhere else in Germany that I know of is this to be studied so advantageously and so easily as in Berlin, the seat of Government, the headquarters of Realpolitik, and it seems to me most apparent among the highly educated classes there. It would be a good thing to get more understanding of personal equations than is current amongst us Englishmen. If judges and merchants and diplomatists can be led into wrong impressions, how much more are the multi-

tudes here, who have no direct knowledge of foreign habits of mind, likely to make mistakes. And what is true of us is true of the Germans themselves. We also have some admirable qualities which are obscured by our other characteristics. It requires life among us and knowledge of our ways and of our language to disentangle the true relation and character of these qualities. If the process is once started it is not difficult to continue. Frenchmen and Russians now appreciate us more than they did, simply because improved international relations have at last led them to look for our good qualities rather than to look on our deficiencies. A similar change for the better has even now come over our relations with our relatives in the United States. What an excellent thing it would be for the peace of the world if the process were to set in all round, so that just as we and the French and the Russians and the Americans have found a strong inclination to look for and believe in the best in each other, the same tendency were to set in as between the Germans and ourselves. There is no apparently insuperable reason why in forming a new friendship we should not carry on other and older friendships, and carry them with us into the new one to the profit of everyone concerned. Such a change might not supersede considerations of self-defense, but its tendency would probably be in the direction of lightening the financial burdens which these entail.

What is wanted is, then, education in mutual understanding. That is why this gathering at Oxford is of more than local importance. I can think of few things more desirable for the world at this moment than that England and Germany should come to understand each other. But such mutual understanding is not possible excepting on the basis of study and the knowledge that is born of it. On the whole, I think we are more deficient in this study than are the Germans. They know our literature and our history much better than we do theirs. Shakespeare and

Scott are almost as familiar to them as they are to ourselves. For one Briton that can read and speak German there are five Germans that can read and speak English. On the other hand, they seem to me to know almost less of our way of looking at things than we do of theirs. We are not really a nation that conceals deep-laid plans and selfish schemes under the guise of obscurity in word and deed. We do not seek, as of set principle and purpose, to annex more and more of the surface of the earth in advance of all others. What we have actually done in this direction we have done, not as the outcome of any preconceived and thought-out policy, but because for a long time we were the only people on the spot, and because at the moment it was the obvious thing to do and we were the only people ready to do it. Germany seems to me to have had one particular piece of ill luck, the misfortune of having been born as a nation a hundred years late in the world's history. The fact has modified the form of what otherwise would have been her mode of development. But it need not materially hamper her progress. She is already one of the greatest nations in the world in virtue of character and intellectual endowment. Her power of organization is unrivaled. She has high standards of excellence in her methods and great aptitude for what is actual and concrete. She is penetrating everywhere and to the profit of mankind. Nothing is likely to keep her back, and I think I may add that nothing is so likely to smooth her path as really frank and easy relations, in commerce, in politics, in society, with this country. For some of us—a great many of us—believe that the greater the trade and commerce of Germany the greater will be our trade and commerce. Coöperation in development is a great factor for all concerned.

THE GERMAN LANGUAGE

No doubt there are subjective difficulties. I have already referred to those occasioned by the barrier

erected by the peculiarities of the German language. It possesses advantages, but it also possesses disadvantages, and causes somewhat of a gulf between the German and his foreign neighbors. One cannot, however appreciative one may be of things German, but make certain complaints of this language. The verb is remote from the substantive and is a sore trial to the foreigner. The Gothic type and the Kursiv-schrift are oppressions to the foreign eye. In the hands of a bad writer this language is a burden even to the student. Carlyle himself, a real admirer of German literature, has to say in his "Frederick the Great," that "German to this day is a frightful dialect for the stupid, the pedant, and dullard sort. Only in the hands of the gifted does it become supremely good." But I sometimes think that even the Germans themselves do not appreciate the power that is latent in their language of being made admirable for all purposes when the pen is that of a great master of style. I do not speak of the lyric. We all know that for the purposes of lyrical poetry German has hardly a rival. I speak of prose. I refer for an illustration to Heinrich Heine. When I visit Düsseldorf it is with sadness that I see no mark to show that the town is proud of its association with his name. He was trying at times. He laughed at his countrymen. But then he laughed at us Englishmen also, and perhaps he laughed most of all at the French. He really knew and loved Germany, and yet Germany can hardly be said to appreciate him, and this, the fact notwithstanding that he wrote German prose as perhaps no other ever has. We have learned to marvel at the young Goethe, who, before he was twenty-six, had produced much of his greatest work—the *Urfaust*, *Goetz*, *Werther*, and some of the finest of his lyrics. But of Heine we hear little in Germany. I think it is a sign of a certain want of open-mindedness that Germany does not fully appreciate this unique figure—the man who knew so much and said it so distinctly in such perfect words. In Heine Sainte-Beuve

has his rival in delicacy of appreciation. The language of Renan is not more exquisitely graceful and precise. And yet there is, so far as I know, no important memorial to him in Germany—not even in Düsseldorf, his birthplace.

CONCLUSION

We are all prone to the unconsciousness which comes from being narrow, we here in England at least as much as our neighbors. We overlook, for instance, that in the nineteenth century we produced two literary figures and two only of European reputation—Byron and Scott. Byron never attained to maturity, and Scott is full of padding. So is Goethe, for that matter, at least the Goethe of later life. But Germany in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century had her Elizabethan age, so far as literature and philosophy were concerned. How much poorer would the whole world be but for this period of German life in which she for the time outstripped every other country! Yet even then she indulged in tendencies which needed correction, and if she had listened to Heinrich Heine they might have been corrected and the outlook enlarged. And now the *revanche* is in progress, much as Heine predicted, and, looking at the German railway bookstalls, I can see that a Gallic spirit is advancing on Berlin. It need not have been so, and it should not have been so, and Heine told of a better way. Had his counsel been listened to there ought to have been no Nietzsche period—so at least it seems to a foreigner.

I repeat that we English are apt to be narrow. We provoke the world by our apparent unconsciousness of the transitory nature of national institutions. Change is the order of the day. What will the world be like a hundred years hence? No one can foresee. Can the centralized Russian Empire hold together in the face of the march of civilization and the progress

of Japan and China also? Will not these countries afford examples which will be followed outside their own boundaries? Will the German Empire a hundred years hence be anything like what it is to-day? And how will it be with the British Empire? Few people suppose that, even if George the Third had not been foolish, the United States would have remained bound up with us and subject to a centralized Government. Some of us are quite aware that with Canada and Australia and New Zealand and South Africa the same difficulty might well arise unless great care is taken. Few people now talk of a rigid system of Imperial Federation on the old lines of a quarter of a century since. The proposition would be an anachronism and too dangerous. If Canada, for example, were to develop eighty millions of a population, could we remain with her under any sort of apparently written or rigid system? Possibly! It all depends how elastic the system really was, how light the rein of Common Government, and how complete the autonomy of the Canadians. By learning to see things as others see them we may put off, perhaps for an indefinite period, days which, if there were constraint or lack of intelligence, would be inevitable. And that is why we do well to study the lesson of how to understand our neighbors all round, those who speak English and those who speak German, and to try to correct certain insular traits of mind which are characteristic of us.

The Greeks used to say that the knowledge of self is the hardest to gain of all kinds of knowledge, and this is as true of nations as it is of individuals. But it is surely worth while to make the effort to gain the knowledge. For it may help us to secure that in the particular case we are considering, that of Germany and Great Britain, neither of two great nations shall fail to realize the magnitude of its responsibility for the understanding and appreciation of the other.

LONDON, ENGLAND.

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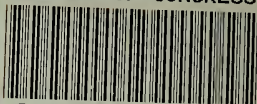
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